

SOCIOLOGY

MacIver, R. M. and Page, Charles H.
Society. An Introductory Analysis.
 London, 1950. Macmillan. Pp. 697.
 Price 25s.

PROFESSOR MACIVER's well-known textbook, now first published in England, was intended for beginners in the study of sociology. There are, however, few beginners in the social sciences who can comfortably digest and absorb a book so relentlessly analytic as this. Professor MacIver and his collaborator, in their footnotes and their forty pages of "notes on further reading," give plentiful reminders of the rich findings of social investigators, so diverse in method, subject and range; but the body of their systematic exposition is austere bare. Those determined enough to read the whole work will acquire a comprehensive, well-articulated framework for their subsequent thinking and experience of social phenomena. It is composed of three books. The first book deals with introductory concepts in our approach to society and with the relation between man's environment and his social adjustment; here the interplay of genetic and extrinsic forces receives an impartial scrutiny, with special reference to the investigation of twins and of children brought up in foster homes. Book two expounds the social codes and *mores*, and the major forms of social structure within which are included the family, the community and various ethnic, racial, economic and other groups. Book three is concerned with social change. Here demographic variations and the range of social selection are reviewed, and, at the conclusion of the chapter, under the significant title, "The dark problem of social selection," the authors stress the contrast between the clearness of the causes and the obscurity of the results of this process; the contrast arises, in their view, chiefly because the whole social environment is changing at the same time as social selection is taking place. In the succeeding chapters the complexity of social change is recognized and is treated on lines very close to those already

familiar to readers of Professor MacIver's book on social causation. The authors are emphatic that social causation cannot be clearly understood if we merely enumerate the factors at work, set them side by side, and attribute to them differing degrees of influence. Study of people's attitudes, the means of adaptation at their disposal and the environment, which together condition or determine their changing objectives in social life, requires that the various factors must be significantly related to one another by the sociologist. In a complex society it is no longer possible, as it is in primitive societies with their all-embracing solidarity, for the individual to have his values integrated for him by the community with its accepted culture and *mores*; he has to do that for himself, and his personality is therefore far more important in deciding how he will live as a social unit than if he were a member of a simpler society.

HILDA LEWIS.

STERILIZATION

Woodside, Moya. *Sterilization in North Carolina: a Sociological and Psychological Study.* 1950. University of North Carolina Press. (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege) Pp. 219. Price 20s.

THIS valuable book is a report by an Englishwoman on a twenty-year-old experiment carried out in one of the States of the U.S.A.

North Carolina, situated about midway down the Union's eastern seaboard, has an area slightly smaller than that of England and a population about a tenth of ours, which numbered $3\frac{1}{2}$ million at the 1940 census. The distribution of this population between town and country is almost exactly the reverse of ours, 75 per cent being rural. The largest town contains 100,000 inhabitants. There are no great industrial centres, no metropolitan congestion, no concentration of urban slums and no spread of suburbs. Agriculture is the principal occupation, the chief crops being cotton, corn and tobacco.

North Carolina is, comparatively speaking, a poor State; the average *per capita* income seven years ago was less than two-thirds that of the national average of the United States. The women marry young and are fertile; indeed, the mean size of family, according to sample data, was 3.82, the highest of any State in the Union, for which the national average was 3.15. Over a quarter of the population are negroes, who are more fertile than the whites.

Mrs. Woodside has skilfully presented her material in such a way as to bring out its interest for both American and British readers; indeed, the latter can learn much despite the aforementioned differences from this country in geographical, demographical and social conditions.

North Carolina is far from being the State of the U.S.A. wherein the largest number of people have been sterilized or wherein a sterilization policy has been most vigorously pursued. Up till January 1st, 1949, the number of sterilizing operations officially reported as having been carried out in the whole of the U.S.A. under specific sterilization laws (which vary among the twenty-seven out of the forty-eight States which have such laws) was 49,207. (No one knows how many have been performed outside these laws). Of these operations no less than 19,042, or 39 per cent, were carried out in California, the corresponding figure for North Carolina being 2,152 (4.4 per cent). But more significant than round numbers of the thoroughness with which sterilization is carried out is the rate of sterilizations per population. According to this index North Carolina ranks fifth among American States. In the course of the five years ending with 1948 there took place in North Carolina 3.66 sterilizations per 100,000 of population. The State which, by this standard, easily leads is Delaware, with a figure of 9.36; California comes third with 5.88. Hence the State described in this book is not, from the standpoint of the experiment here considered, the Union's first exhibit.

The present sterilization law in North Carolina came into force in 1933; it supplanted an earlier enactment, passed in 1929,

which was declared unconstitutional because it did not contain provision for notice of hearing or right of appeal. The existing law sets up a Eugenics Board of five people which has jurisdiction over three classes of persons only, namely those suffering from mental defect, mental disorders and epilepsy. The Board cannot authorise the sterilization on physical or social grounds of any person who falls outside these classes.

Before embarking on her inquiry Mrs. Woodside did what everyone should do in her place; she asked herself certain questions. Why, with little religious opposition and with a workable (though perhaps not an ideal) law, and with a high incidence of mental deficiency, has the total number of sterilizations (which between 1930 and 1947 averaged 140 a year) not been larger? Why has the number of operations (largest in 1938) fluctuated from year to year? Why have more negro than white males (proportionately) been sterilized? Why does the number of petitions vary so much in different counties (of which there are a hundred) within the State? Why do the petitions coming from the different institutions in the State likewise vary? Other relevant questions were asked.

The main chapters of the book provide clear answers to these questions. During the second half of 1947 the author visited the hospitals and institutions under the jurisdiction of the North Carolina Hospitals Board of Control and interviewed the superintendents and other members of the staff, whom she plied with pertinent questions. She also followed up a sample of forty-eight women who had been sterilized and, in a valuable chapter, records their experiences. The main chapters of her book are taken up with a record and digest of her findings.

The result, as remarked by Dr. R. L. Dickinson in a foreword, is valuable not only to the State of North Carolina but to the whole of the U.S.A., where the principles of negative eugenics are taken more seriously than here and where the useful possibilities of voluntary eugenic sterilization are being cautiously but, in the different States, unequally explored. Mrs. Woodside's assessment

is also of much interest in this country, where, seventeen years ago, the potential value of voluntary sterilization was unanimously recognized by a Departmental Committee, whose recommendations, which circumvent many of the difficulties inherent in the North Carolina Statute, have hitherto been completely ignored.

The book is extremely clearly written ; the main statistical facts are set forth in a well-designed appendix of tables, and throughout the human touch is maintained by illustrative case-histories which will interest British readers by reason of how they resemble and, in minor ways, differ from our own type of

case-history. Most important is the author's attitude of critical detachment. Though its conclusions are generally favourable to North Carolina's experiment, her book is in no sense a defence or vindication of the methods she describes. It is a critical though sympathetic evaluation of an attempt to deal with a set of resistant problems common to all civilized countries but which present themselves in cultural conditions differing widely from one another.

A happy link with our *Society* is found in the book's dedication to the memory of Dr. Maurice Newfield, till lately editor of THE EUGENICS REVIEW. C. P. BLACKER.

OTHER NOTICES

Büchi, E. C. *Über die Abhängigkeit der Missbildungen vom Gebäralter.* Reprinted from *Archiv der Julius Klaus-Stiftung für Vererbungsfor-schung, Sozialanthropologie und Rassenhygiene*, 25, 1/2, 61-5, 1950.

Dr. Büchi has analysed for maternal age the records of no less than 2,619 congenitally malformed infants born in three Copenhagen hospitals between the years 1911 and 1949. For purposes of comparison he has taken the age of every tenth mother of the 168,000 who gave birth to normal children over the same period. The incidence of 1.56 per cent of malformed births agrees with that found by other workers. Maternal age is divided into six five-year periods and the percentage distribution of malformed births is expressed as a ratio of that for normal births. A similar comparison is made for each of the twenty main types of congenital deformity encountered and the results have been examined by the χ^2 test.

The method of comparison answers the purpose of Dr. Büchi's investigation, but the reviewer feels that it would have been of greater interest to have known the age distribution of normal births, so that the absolute incidence of each deformity in each age period could have been calculated.

Six conditions show a significant increase in incidence with rising maternal age: mongolism, hydrocephaly, anencephaly and spina bifida, congenital heart disease, harelip and cleft palate and

pes equino-varus. There is, however, no indication given as to whether his cases were all "booked" or included emergency admissions. The importance of this has been emphasized by C. O. Carter, who points out that if emergencies are included the relationship between anencephaly and hydrocephaly and maternal age may in part be accounted for by the inclusion of elderly mothers who had planned to have their confinements at home.

Two conditions, hypospadias and undescended testicle, occurred more frequently in the younger than the older age groups. The χ^2 test indicates that the probabilities of this having occurred by chance are of the order of 1 in 10 and 1 in 5 respectively, but the shape of the distribution curves suggests that this is not a chance relationship.

Dr. Büchi states that his material shows no clear evidence that malformations are related to parity, but the data on which this conclusion is based are not stated. This is a pity, as Record and McKeown in investigating a large series of congenital malformations of the central nervous system have recently shown that the relationship between anencephaly and spina bifida and maternal age disappears if the parity is held constant.

The paper concludes with a review of the possible causes of the variation in incidence of malformations with maternal age.

J. P. M. TIZARD.